



Natomas Oral Histories

2015/027

Oral interview of

Efren Guttierrez

October 11, 2018

Interviewer and transcriber: Anne Z. Ofsink

Center for Sacramento History
551 Sequoia Pacific Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95811-0229
(916) 808-7072
csh@cityofsacramento.org
www.centerforsacramentohistory.org
© Center for Sacramento History, 2018

Efren Gutierrez was a realtor, broker, and community activist in the Natomas area for nearly 40 years before relocating just outside of Puerto Vallarta in October 2018. He advocated for underprivileged and underrepresented populations, the Chicano movement, a living wage, campaign finance reform, public health, labor, and other issues. He started the Chicano Consortium in 1992.

Before turning on the tape recorder and starting this oral history interview, Anne Ofsink went over the topics she hoped to cover with Efren. As she did, he began telling stories, and Anne took notes, which have been inserted into the interview transcript below using brackets.

Anne: Thank you so much for coming.

Efren: Thank you for inviting me.

Anne: We really appreciate this. So, let's talk a little bit about your family. Where did you come from, where did your parents come from? Could you just talk a little bit about that?

Efren: Well, it's short.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: My folks are from Mexico. Both of my parents are from Mexican parents. My father [Efren Gutierrez] just happened to have been born in Arizona, in Flagstaff [in 1934]. But, basically, grew up in Mexico [near Guadalajara]. So, he met my mother [Elvira "Vera" Morales, born February 2, 1940]. He happened — the fact that he was born in the United States, he was drafted, and he went to Korea, and did some time in Korea, and I guess during that period he met my mother in Guadalajara, in Jalisco, in Mexico. As I mentioned, she was a pretty little thing. She was, I guess, queen of her little town [San Martin de Hidalgo, Jalisco, Mexico] festival. And my father who was all dressed in his shiny uniform caught her eye and, lo and behold, voila — I came about. [When his parents married, his mother was 14 and his father was 21.] I was born [February 6, 1956] in Stockton, California, where my father at that time with his brother [Fidel] had a trucking company where they'd take furs from Alaska to the Bay Area. That's how they made some of their money. So, that's where Stockton came in. So, I was born in Stockton, in a little place called French Camp. At that point, my father [was diagnosed with leukemia], I guess, his health started to deteriorate, so they went back to Guadalajara. A few months after that, he passes away.

[00:02:00]

My mom, at 16 years old, was encouraged by her family, and being that my dad was a veteran, to come back to the United States. Unfortunately, as life is, I got polio in my right leg [as an infant], so it was an urgency to get me back here to get treated. So, my mom and one of her brothers, Rafael, came back to Stockton to see what they could do to get me well again. At that point, we lived in Stockton for a little bit, where my mom met my stepfather, Jesus Bejarano [at a cannery where they both worked. Jesus was a foot taller and 20 years older than Vera. The family spoke Spanish at home, though Jesus could also speak English. Jesus had two grown sons from a previous marriage and relished the chance to raise another son, showering Efren with love and attention]. And then at that point [when Efren was 5], we moved to Sacramento [where Jesus took a job running a Del Monte warehouse off Harbor Boulevard in West Sacramento]. Our first home was in North Sacramento, on Lindley, 363 Lindley Drive. We moved there, and I started to attend what would be Norte, I mean, excuse me, Noralto, which is the elementary

school there. From there, mom decided to put me into Catholic school [starting in fifth grade], Our Lady of Fatima, right across the street from St. Joseph's Church. [The schoolchildren nicknamed the school "the pink prison" because of its paint color.] Then I decided to go to public school and I went to Las Palmas Junior High and from there to Norte del Rio High. And from there, due to a [paternal] grandmother who was kind of ill in health, I had a house available to me in Stockton. So I moved back to Stockton for a little bit and [at his mother's suggestion] attended San Joaquin Delta College.

[As a child, Efren's mother went to Fremont Adult School and obtained her GED. She excelled in math and eventually decided to get her real estate license. He mentioned that he changed his last name to Gutierrez because it was easier for people to find his number with that unique spelling, saying, "I'm the last Gutierrez in the book."]

Anne: Efren, I'm going to interrupt you for just a minute, because you made this really nice statement when we were talking earlier that I think would be nice to include here, which was how, when you were in junior high already, you had this wonderful teacher who saw such potential in you, and she encouraged you to then get involved with the — ah, where are my notes —

Efren: The Model United Nations.

Anne: Thank you, the Model United Nations. And so, you then had opportunity with children from all different cultures —

[00:04:11]

Efren: I was very blessed. In North Sacramento, it is kind of a unique area. If people are familiar with that area, Norwood and Lindsey and Grove, and that whole area. There's the elementary school, the junior high, and the high school are all together. It is kind of unique. So many of us who grew up there kind of went through all those schools kind of together. We saw each other throughout our lives. It was very unique in that it was a high school ahead of its times, in that it wasn't just like most schools, segregated. It wasn't of one mix. Somehow Norte del Rio was very unique in that it brought together the kids from Rio Tierra, it brought the kids from Valley Vista — I believe it is, or Vista Valley — and the kids from Las Palmas together in Norte del Rio for an experiment, I think. It was really unique. We played with the rich kids and the rich kids played with the poor kids, and the poor kids played with the colored kids, and the colored kids played with the white kids. It was a very unique mixture of uniqueness that I was —

Anne: So what cultural groups did you get to —

Efren: Oh, it was nice because we had Filipinos, Chinese people, we had Russians, we had Germans, we had Mexicans, and we had people that are from here, white folks that were just here, you know, poor white folks because North Sacramento, it's always been a working-class area. So, it was a very nice mix. And then we had students from the Woodlake area, which, as you know, has always been a predominant area in this town. So, they too got exposed to —

Anne: Multicultural —

Efren: A multicultural mix. So at Las Palmas, lo and behold, she was an English teacher, my English teacher Miss Cramnick. No, not Cramnick, excuse me. Hm, I mentioned her earlier. [Alice Krumenacher]

[00:06:18]

Anne: You did, but I don't think I wrote it down. So, we'll just know that you had an influential teacher there and the name might come to you in a bit.

Efren: Yeah.

Anne: So, the other thing that happened, and I'll just briefly mention it, that then you became captain of the debate team. And so —

Efren: It was really interesting, this teacher — forgive me, I believe it's Cramnick, or Cromenberg, or something like that. A nice German lady, anyway, she saw something in me. So, she talked to a gentleman — I think his name was Andy Quinnos — who was at Norte del Rio about me and suggested that maybe I would be his next in line to take over the Model United Nations at the high school. Now, I thought that was rare because I was still in junior high. So, I thought, wow! So, I got exposed to that. And yes, Andy took me under his wing and said, "Ok, you're going to be the next chairman." So, the following year he helped me start organizing it. So, I became the next chair for the next three years.

Anne: Excellent.

Efren: So, during my high school, I was chairman of the Model United Nations. Also, I guess from there, people could see I was doing something right, and so I became junior class president [and captain of the debate team] and then after that I became student body president.

Anne: Very nice.

Efren: And I graduated in 1975.

Anne: Well, and good work for your — good foundation, I guess I'm trying to say, for your later years in which you then got into politics and all sorts of community activities.

[00:8:02]

Efren: I think if it wasn't for the Model United Nations, I wouldn't have had the worldview, because you could see what was going on in Africa, and you could see what was going on in China, and you could see what was going on in different parts of the world that you really just never would have gotten exposed to if it wouldn't have been for this type of a forum where people talked about their countries and dressed in their traditional awares. It was just interesting, it was like an awakening for people, not just for me, of course as being the chairperson it was nice, because I directed the resolutions and discussions. It was nice to see the people getting into their own culture —

Anne: Yes.

Efren: And traditions.

Anne: Yes. This was an expectation.

Efren: This is what America is.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: To me, at that point. America is all these colors. It is everybody being part of this mix.

Anne: Yes. Equally.

Efren: That's what it was for. And so that opened up to me — a part of it that unfortunately was going on at that time was Vietnam. Some of my friends, people that I knew that were older than me, unfortunately, never made it back. And so, little by little, my consciousness started to tell me something is not right. So, I started to get the political bug. At that point, as you know, Mr. Nixon, President Nixon, was bombing Vietnam with B52 bombers, indiscriminately, because he just wanted to end the war, I guess. So, anyway, so a lot of us basically said, "Enough." So I think that was my awakening into national politics. When I said, you know, we have to do something. So, we started to educate ourselves and other people about the need. When we started to find out that the majority of people that were being drafted to Vietnam were blacks and Latinos, disproportionately, and we said, "Why? Obviously you're not giving us college, you're not giving us jobs, but you're willing to send us to war." So, many of us — I wasn't of the age to be drafted, you know, but, I know friends who basically went to Canada, or went to Mexico, and just said, "I'm not going to fight this war." And so it made me realize, what are we doing as a country, you know, why are we doing this to other people? What are we doing? So, I think that got me started, per se.

[00:10:42]

And then about that time, I decided to go to Stockton, where my grandmother was ill, to that point of life. So, I basically took the reins of the house and at that point I proceeded to attend San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton. I think I was there for about a year, maybe a year and a half or so. Then I decided, "Hey, I need to get back to Sacramento, because that's really where I grew up, in Sacramento." So, I moved back to Sacramento, went to Sac State, attended CSUS where I was employed at the Equal Educational Opportunity Program. I worked there for about three years as a recruit. I would go to high schools and junior colleges around the region and encourage them to come to Sac State. Of course, my main thrust was to try to get people of color, the Latino and black communities, the Filipinos and others that traditionally were not going to college. My target was with them. I would go set up tables with my banner and the whole thing and encourage people. I encouraged people for two years or so to come to college. During that time, I got involved in the local Sac State politics with MEChA, which is the Chicano organization on many campuses. I got involved in there and started to involve myself more in politics and I realized that many times even among ourselves — surprise, surprise — we can't get along. So, at that point [seeing MEChA's limitations with community outreach] we created the Chicano Consortium [in 1992], which we called the Spirit of Aztlan. The consortium's main duty was to participate in every venue, organization, government, city, county that we could have a voice at. From school boards, to commissions, to so on — every opportunity, we made an effort to be there and participate and lend our voice.

[00:12:58]

Anne: That's wonderful. And, I'm going to move us on. So, you then graduated with what degree from Sac State?

Efren: A BA in communications.

Anne: Great.

Efren: I think that was in 1981.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: Then in 1982 is when I got my real estate license and I started my professional career as a realtor. Thirty-six years later, here I am. *[Laughter]*

Anne: *[Laughter]*

Efren: For the last eight years of that thirty-six years, I've been a broker. First, you become a realtor and then you become a broker. A realtor is like a BA, and a master's is like a broker. It's like that.

Anne: Ok.

Efren: So, now I'm a broker, I own my own company and can hire people and so on. So that's what I've done as a professional. [Efren worked with his mother for Davis and Davis Associates, Coldwell Banker, Better Homes on Northgate Boulevard near San Juan Road, and Help-U-Sell at San Juan Boulevard and Truxel, and then together they opened New West Realtors on Northgate Boulevard.]

Anne: Ok. Then we were talking a little bit about how it was that since you were, at one point anyway, growing up living in North Sacramento, but during that time you were going to St. Joseph's Church, you were saying, and you were getting to know people because the Catholics from here went there, and so you were getting to know people here in the Gardenland area —

Efren: We knew people from school, and then people from church. We had at least two, three families that we would visit quite frequently in Gardenland. I remember the bridge on Main Street was a bridge, an old wooden bridge, back then. We used to know the Torres family, who still have a big lot over in that area. I think off of Kenmar, in that area where they live. And I remember Northgate Boulevard was just barely being built, I think, being paved.

[00:14:56]

Anne: Do you remember when the name was Marysville, Marysville Boulevard? Or was it Northgate Boulevard?

Efren: No, it was always Northgate to me. To me, it was always Northgate.

Anne: Then you were telling us, me, about this community market, or community garden.

Efren: Oh yeah, well, right there on Mendel Way where Northgate, the development of Northgate, stopped right there. So, right there in front of Mendel, which is now where American Lakes [Elementary School] is at, and Northgate Park, was basically a community garden — as far as you could see, was garden.

Anne: That's great!

Efren: Tomatoes, corn, chilis. It was rows and rows. Everybody who lived in that area had a little plot.

Anne: How neat. I've never heard this story before.

Efren: Everybody had a little plot and everybody would go interact with everybody. It was free and people would go and they would exchange. "I've got some chilis, I'll exchange for some tomatoes and some corn." *[Laughter]*

Anne: *[Laughter]*

Efren: It had its own little community garden. I remember Mendel Way was still dirt. They were still building houses. Eventually that became Northgate Park and American Lakes School, and eventually they got over to Truxel. But, that took quite a ways —

Anne: Ok.

Efren: — before it got over there. That whole area, like I said, Mendel, Brewerton, all that area was already kind of established already. That was already there. North E[?], all those streets, they were there already. Normington, those streets were there already. At that point, they were the new houses.

Anne: Yes, yes.

Efren: Ok? After them, was the development of American Lakes and that whole area.

Anne: Ok. The Natomas area, you might call that. After the Northgate/Gardenland, then —

Efren: Right. Then it became South Natomas.

[00:16:59]

Anne: Yes.

Efren: Exactly. That was the whole new South Natomas.

Anne: And so, what are some shops, what are some places that you remember from then?

Efren: From back in the day that I can remember? Okay, well, on the south end like we were talking, you have the Cabana, the famous Cabana Restaurant and Bar. Then you had Mike's Market that was there forever and ever. Then next to that was Yolanda's. Of course, they had the little Northgate liquor store that was right next to Yolanda's, right there together. Then as you kept going down the street there wasn't really a lot there, just other little shops. Then when you started going toward the north side, there was the Mercadito, the little store owned by the Gomez/Luna family. Then you had Ramona's. Ramona's Restaurant. The original Ramona's. I'm telling you, I remember, I think, it was only like a little trailer.

Anne: *[Laughter]*.

Efren: They had converted it into a little restaurant, and that was Ramona's restaurant. That was pretty much the strip.

Anne: And, Kmart, you said.

Efren: And then Kmart, yes! Kmart was our big store, right there where I guess Foods Co — was it Foods Co? Is it FoodMaxx? The one on Northgate?

Anne: Yes, I think that might be it.

Efren: I always get those confused. Anyway, the one on Northgate was a Kmart for a long, long time.

Anne: You also mentioned, excuse me, an interesting little tidbit here, I thought, about how you had worked with your mother at Help-U-Sell, then after that, since we're in that area now, you're talking about when you worked for Better Homes.

Efren: Yeah. Where the shopping center — because those were fairly new still. The Kmart was new. The Lamppost. Right now where you have, I guess is it Dobbs and Smart and Final in that little shopping center? That was a new one, a brand-new shopping center.

Anne: Ok.

[00:19:00]

Efren: And Better Homes opened up an office and they offered me a management position there, so I started working there. Now at that time, I'd already bought my house on Mendel Way. At that time, it had already been developed, Northgate Park was there, American Lakes was there. Truxel was already in and everything. Truxel was getting developed at about that time in that area. Truxel was already there, but there was still building. And then I moved in onto Mendel Way and lived there a few years. That was my first home. Then I moved to another home over here off San Juan Road called Old West Drive. I lived there for a while, until about 2010. Then after that, I rented for a little bit, and then I moved in with my mother in her last years to kind of take care of her [she died September 19, 2016].

Anne: And that house was?

Efren: The house on Rancho Silva.

Anne: Ok.

Efren: That was mom's house, now I've taken over and —

Anne: And now you're emptying it since the movers came yesterday. *[Laughter]*

Efren: Yes, I'm getting ready to move on myself.

Anne: Then I just wanted to mention about the interesting vision you had of when the Loma Prieta earthquake happened.

Efren: Oh yes!

Anne: And you were sitting in Better Homes.

Efren: I was sitting there looking across the street at the Kmart parking lot, and all of a sudden, I see like waves. The building goes up, the cars go up, and I think even the gas station was there already, and even

the gas station went up, and it was such an eerie feeling. The window went up, the desk where I was sitting went up like this. It was like, "Did you feel that?" "Yes, I did." [Laughter] There were like three or four waves.

Anne: Isn't that fascinating!

Efren: The power of Mother Nature.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: I never felt nothing like that in my life.

[00:20:59]

Anne: Yes. I thought that was so interesting. Ok, and so then we are moving into your political growth. And so, you really had taken on that worldview, and were seeing what you felt were some injustices going on around you. You mentioned about the disproportionate number of Latinos and blacks that were going into the military.

Efren: Into the military, right. Getting drafted, right. Growing up in — I guess, when you're a child and your parents insulate you, you don't feel poor. You know. I was never poor. My dad was a working-class, middle-class, good wage earner. I had the best. I was the first kid on the block with a silver bike, chrome bike.

Anne: [Laughter]

Efren: You know, I had footballs, the latest basketballs. Anything that I could think of, I had. I didn't miss anything.

Anne: I'll comment just a minute, because you said that your dad, stepdad in this case, got this job supervising this big warehouse, Del Monte warehouse in West Sacramento. So, you were living in North Sacramento, but he went there to work. You mentioned that you had any kind of food that Del Monte made and it was just interesting to you because any time they tried out meatballs, or tried out something or another, your household had it. [Laughter]

Efren: Yes, we were the test project, I think. [Laughter] My dad used to always bring stuff. My dad would show up every other day with a case of something: tomato sauce, corn, green beans, you name it. When they went into selling pudding, we got pudding.

Anne: I'll bet you were popular in the neighborhood.

[00:22:56]

Efren: Oh, and we had a lot of friends. They would come over and my mom would say, "Oh yeah, make a bag!" They would go in the garage and make themselves a bag of stuff, "Oh, gracias, Elvira." "No problem, no problem." So we had a lot of comadres and compadres who used to come by and make their little bag of goodies, and my mom would be, "Yeah, no problem." Or, my dad, too, being that he was supervisor, he would sell them. "You want a case of tomatoes? It will cost you, 20 bucks."

Anne: Oh. [Laughter]

Efren: He used to wheel and deal. People would come by, “Hey, do you got my case of corn?” “We got it, okay.” He’d hustle his little dollar on the side — that was his little hustle. But, no, one whole side of our garage was probably four shelves, and from one side to the other total Del Monte food. Juices. Oh, I loved — because they had orange juice, pineapple juice, apple juice. We had boxes of that stuff. I’m lucky I don’t have Del Monte on my head.

Anne: *[Laughter]* So, you didn’t know want.

Efren: No, I did not miss a meal. And then my mom being the very traditional Mexican mom that she was, she kept us pretty chunky, you know, my dad and me, pretty full. *[Laughter]*

Anne: With wonderful Mexican meals.

Efren: Yes. She was a great cook.

Anne: And then you spoke about, kind of getting back a minute, to the beliefs that you had, the values, that were coming in to you about how you felt the world was going to be —

Efren: As a young man now in high school and getting into college you kind of see the inequities. You know, you’re sheltered as a child. Your parents really don’t want you to see the ugliness or the dark side of things. So, they shelter you. Until you get into college, or out in the streets, as they say —

Anne: Sure.

[00:25:54]

Efren: — you get to see and feel what’s really happening. I had a friend of mine, Raymond Brewer, unfortunately was gunned down, was shot by the Sacramento Police Department, because he was carrying a stick that they said was a gun, was a rifle. He was a young man. He would have been a superstar. He was an excellent football player. It was a terrible loss to the community. He was on Del Paso Boulevard coming home, him and Adrian, another friend — Adrian Richardson, I think, was the other kid’s name. And Adrian Richardson and him were coming home one night on Del Paso Boulevard, which was a little ways from their home — they lived over here in the Manors, Strawberry Manor, so it was a little bit of a ways. So, they were out running around doing whatever they were doing, and apparently the police chased them and shot Raymond, and the excuse was that he had a rifle. Basically, during those old days, as you know, a lot of people carried sticks because there were dogs.

Anne: Ah.

Efren: So, he was carrying a stick because, as you know, not too be prejudiced, black folks don’t like dogs. You know. Now, I know friends who have dogs. But, back in the day blacks just didn’t like dogs.

Anne: Oh.

Efren: Because you remember, dogs were used against them.

Anne: Ah.

Efren: The police —

Anne: So, Raymond was a black man? And, was Adrian?

Efren: Both of them were black.

Anne: Ok.

Efren: They were running home when the police apparently stopped them. For some reason Raymond ran, for whatever reason, and they proceeded to kill Raymond Brewer.

Anne: So, your political —

Efren: I was in high school, right? I'm a senior, I'm a student body president in high school saying, "What's wrong with Vietnam? Why is our government doing this?" And then I see friends of mine getting shot. I say, "What's going on here?" And I thought, "Wow, hm." So, at that point then I proceeded to go to college.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: And get involved with the Chicano movement, with MEChA.

Anne: That's right.

Efren: And I thought, "Well, obviously my community needs leadership." We need somebody — I never thought me, but — we need somebody to make a change. So, we proceeded to form this group, as I mentioned, the Chicano Consortium. We formed it back in 1992, as a voice, as a means to be heard. To stand out and exert our rights and say, "Wait a minute, this is not how it should be and we need to make it better." So, if you look at my, our T-shirt, we have a T-shirt, basically the Spirit of Aztlan — I don't know if it says that. I think it might say that on there.

Anne: Yes, you gave us this piece of paper here that has the print, so "Spirit of Aztlan."

Efren: And underneath is our motto.

Anne: "Preparing leadership for a better tomorrow." That's excellent, isn't it?

[00:28:13]

Efren: That is what we always put in our minds. We're not just doing it for Latino people. We're not just doing it for Mexicans. We're doing it for all of us to live better. And, how do we do that? By including us in the leadership. That is the problem that we have, not just in this city, but in many parts of our country. There is an element that needs to be tapped, that wants to show, to give, but is not being allowed to.

Anne: Yeah.

Efren: For political, for racial, for economic reasons — for whatever. Now, I think you're going to find from here, in the next couple of months, that there is going to be such a change in this country. Because why? Because women are running. Because why? Because women of color are running. You have now

two or three women of color that are running for governorship. Never in the history of the United States has a black woman run for governorship of anything. It is happening now.

Anne: It gives me the shivers.

Efren: No —

Anne: Very exciting!

Efren: The time is changing. And, in many ways, I felt I did my little part. My little grain, as they say.

Anne: That's right.

Efren: And now it's time for the next generation. And as I turn over my reins to Mario Moreno, who will be the new executive director of the Chicano Consortium. He will bring new talents and new skills, and allow me, as I hope I can, to write about these things.

Anne: Yes!

Efren: I'm working on a book [about his political experiences], little by little, and I hope that book — people have asked me, and I say, no, it's not going to be a book about shaming anybody or speaking badly about Sacramento. I want people to please understand: I love Sacramento. It tears me to leave, but I think it's time for me to leave. So —

[00:30:24]

Anne: I can hear the emotion in your voice.

Efren: I don't want people to feel that I've left because I'm bitter or angry.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: It's because it's just that time.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: I feel like I'm being drawn, pulled to Mexico. My family [who lives there has encouraged him to come]. I guess, I want to write. I've got things I need to put down. Like I said, it's not a book to shame, but it's to say the truth. And if the truth hurts, well, so be it. But I think it needs to be said. I think for too long in the academic world — and I speak to many professors at Sac State that I still keep in contact with, and they too are very frustrated. Like they say, "Hey, Efren, I've got PhDs. I've got this and that. They don't publish our things. Our knowledge isn't for the American public. We have to get it all underground, or we have to go to a special — " It's always been like that, and that's the frustration of a lot of people in the academic world, is that they are not being listened to. We live in a society that's scandalous, in this. Unless you do something scandalous, you don't get attention. You literally have to do something crazy and mad to get people's attention. Because if you go about in a good way, people think, well, why are we afraid of him? Why do we worry about him? He's no threat. He's a nice guy. Nice guys don't get ahead.

Anne: Ah.

[00:32:21]

Efren: I would live, you know — I almost felt like sometimes *[laughter]* you have to almost shoot somebody, cut somebody's head off, run a bus through a building, blow up a gas station — you got to do something so outrageous to get people's attention. Why are we that way?

Anne: Yeah, that's not good.

Efren: No! We created a society that nobody listens to nobody unless you're a lunatic. That's why we're listening to that crazy-ass president we got now. That's why we got him. We've asked for this. We got nobody to blame but the guy in the mirror.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: Okay? We deserve this man. That's why I can't support this no more.

Anne: Yes.

Efren: I can't support a country that won't stop killing people. Since I've been born, since my dad, this country has never stopped warring. Look at the history: Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq. When do we stop? How many generations do we have to keep killing, for the sake of what? Money? Is it money, what this is all about? Is it, you know?

Anne: Good questions.

Efren: I got more than you, so I'm better, I'm smarter than you? It's like our president, "I'm smart because I filed bankruptcy five time." No, you're a swindler, ok, sir? You're not smart. But, for some people, he's intelligent, he's the best thing this country's ever had. What shame have we come to?

Anne: Yes, and so we might see some of that, or read some of that in this book —

Efren: Oh, yes, definitely, definitely!

Anne: — that you're coming up with.

[00:34:24]

Efren: I hope that I can write and do justice. Not to say — like I said, people have asked, oh, are you going to write, talk about so and so? No, no. I know a lot of people and I know people have not always done their best. But some people have done great things that need to be given credit to. I want to give credit to people. Many people don't know who've done things, Latino and black people that have contributed to this city and who will never be written about. People will never know about them, because they weren't trouble makers. They were quiet, gentle people that just went about their business and do good. And that's what I can be.

Anne: Yes. And you are, and you have been. You've done all these things kind of under the — oh, I don't know what that phrase is. Anyway, if we look at the paper you gave me on all your credits and everything, you really did a lot of work here, and thank you for that. And so —

Efren: I thank you, I thank you. No, it isn't easy, and I thank you. I seen Gardenland and Natomas grow tremendously. When I ran for office, I ran with that idea, to make it that much better. There are many things that should have happened in South Natomas that didn't happen.

Anne: And so, tell us a minute what you ran for. You said you ran for office.

Efren: I ran for city council [as an Independent] in 2010, which at that point was District 1.

Anne: Ok.

Efren: Then in 2014, I ran again, which at that point the district had been refigured in 2011, the lines, and so District 1 became District 3. So, I ran for District 3 in 2014 [as a Democrat] with the idea again to bring the years of skills and learnings that I thought I could bring to the city. [He did not win either race.]

Anne: Yes.

Efren: So —

Anne: Thank you for that.

[00:36:29]

Efren: So, you do what you can, and like I said, destiny is funny. The president of Mexico, Obrador, who is a *quote* leftist president [*laughter*] — I feel good and I feel like I want to be part of that. So, I'm hoping when I get to Mexico, I don't know, I want to write my book, I want to just, you know, reorientate myself. [He plans to visit Sacramento once a year.] But I know myself, the political person that I am, it won't take me long and I'll probably get involved in some committee or some group to help the city.

Anne: Help the area that you're living in.

Efren: That's just who I am.

Anne: That's you.

Efren: Yes.

Efren: So, I'm looking forward to that. Forgive me, I think all of us in this society, we run so rapid and we're so stressed, and we don't seem to find any peace or happiness.